

Chapter IV

CONCLUSION

Dalit literature is a journey from mainstream literature to marginal literature, from grand narrative to mini narrative, from individual identity to group identity, from ideal to real, from vertical literature to spiral literature, from self-justification to self-affirmation. This is the “Celebration of difference”.

Dalit literature gives a message about their community not individuality, about revolt not passivity, about progress not backwardness. It informs the entire world about their status in society by portraying the exploitation, helplessness, grief, suppression and enslavement of subalterns. The shared political position of these authors is against the hegemony of upper and middle class Hindu beliefs and for the power of the human beings against oppressive social rules. Dalit authors question religion and Identity throughout their literature. It could be said that Dalit literature achieved a firm foundation in the mid-20th century; but its framework was established in the early 19th century. Today, Dalit writers have their literary foundation with ideology and publish numerous journals. They also have a number of political organizations supporting them. The most prominent of these is the Dalit Panthers (begun in the 1970), which has borrowed much of its ideology from America's Black Panthers. The future of Dalit literature is embarked on the present status of Dalit and their sensibility and certainly new reforming waves are blowing for the radical development in Dalit literature as literature of protest.

The subjectivity of the Dalit autobiographies needs to be understood in terms of the communal self:

The identity of a person will be based on the location to which he/she belongs. Accordingly, the person will undergo the experiences in life. In order to understand the life-experiences of a person several disparate identical criterion can be put to test. It can be caste, class, ethnicity, language, religion, region, gender etc. (Ambedkar 68)

Dalit autobiographies highlighted social realities that have been kept as the central theme and gave the real description of Indian Dalits. Dalit autobiographies are being appreciated for the social purpose. They portray the surroundings of Dalits and their social behavior in the Indian society.

The Dalits who contribute a major chunk of Indian population have suffered socially, mentally, politically and economically because of cruel caste system. The unjust discrimination of the 'Dalits' has deprived them from the basic needs like education, health, housing and development. This deprivation has put the Dalit on the margins of the society and helps in widening the gulf between the Dalits and Non-Dalits still further. The holy seats of a religious system assign this discrimination to a God sent dictate which claims the birth of the Dalit class from the feet of Brahma. The upper caste people tricked the idea from the sacred texts and asserted it further to get benefit from a social order. The laws and a social system are the created factors which determine the course of a society. The laws were silent on the exploitation and cruelty done against the Dalit before Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and even before him Jyoti Rao Phule started shaking the senseless society against the injustice of the upper castes.

Dalits are the marginalized section of society. They are called avarna, doom, achchoot etc. They are ignored, oppressed and helpless. Dalits are kept under the category of Harizan and they occupy 'Low' position and status as sweepers, barbers,

washers, dryers, blacksmith, cobblers, butchers etc. The words 'Chamar' and 'Bhangi' are used by the upper castes as derogatory terms. Ancient Hindu law books such as *Manusmriti* and *Gautma Dharma Shastra* did not allow Shudras and Dalits to possess any wealth other than "Dogs and Donkeys". They had no access to education and if someone dares to approach the sacred text, he was given severe punishment. In the Indian Epic *Mahabharata*, there is a celebrated fable about Ekalavya, a tribal boy and outcaste. As he was an outcaste - A Dalit, he was denied education by the famed guru Dronacharya, who embodied the highborn. This fable is an example that power remains in the guarded possession of the highborn, striving to ensure that an outcaste remains a lowly outcaste. Paralyzed by the system, the outcaste will never dare to question it. Untouchability was officially banned by the Indian constitution on January 26, 1950 when the country became a republic & therefore, today, the untouchables are no longer required to place clay pots around their necks to prevent their spit from polluting the ground. They are no longer required to attach brooms to their rumps to wipe out their foot prints as they walk.

Dalit children are bound to live a life which is full of sorrows and sufferings. The upper caste people subject them to some of the cruelest realities. Social alienation exists in the form of a caste system that relegates people to fixed roles. It is the reality in which Dalit children live and against which struggle is inevitable. A Dalit child experiences that there is an intense collision between the world of his aspirations and the caste system.

They frequently use their caste names like Bhangi, Chamar, Chuhara, Khatik, Maharetc and don't hesitate in performing the dirty jobs. Dalit children carry the burden of being Dalits and bowing undertake demeaning tasks. With the passage of

time, some of the caste based occupations have become extinct while many others like Scavenging, Sweeping & menial jobs are still performed by Dalits only.

All human beings are equal before God. He never divides the people of a society on the basis of caste. It is the man who does so. It is surprising to see as to how far people go in dehumanizing others. The caste system in India seemed like a perfect master plan of subjection and domination where the idea of one group being better than the next was not just enforced by the legal system but by religion. Referring to the religion, there are so many rules & regulations for how each caste should behave, and what each group must do.

The cruelty of Non-Dalits aroused the feelings of shame, anger and protest among Dalits. The speeches & activities of B.R. Ambedkar and other such towering figures sow the seeds of self-dignity, resentment and indomitable hope among Dalits. Ambedkar was the great leader of Dalit movement in the 20th century India. It was he who organized and united the Dalits to effectively use political means toward their goal of social equality. The movement spearheaded by Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar continues, decades later, to gather momentum. Dalits, ones rendered untouchable, are finding their voice through Ambedkar who gave them message to "educate, organize, and agitate". They are mounting a slow but steady rebellion.

Jyotiba Phule, a teacher in a Christian school was from the gardener community. He established the first non-Brahmin social organization that emphasized education for Dalits and reduction of Brahmin ritual power. In the 1870s, Jyotiba's campaign for education of the traditionally disenfranchised laid the ground work for massive social change. He also included women in his work. He used psychological shock as a method of getting a passionate response from his readers and after reading his essays, it seems impossible to remain calm and passive. Phule wanted to upset the

lower castes into arguing, thinking and fighting. Even today, most Dalits see education as the panacea for their suffering. Literature is the mirror of a society. Dalit literature is marked by the wholesale rejection of the language, traditions and concerns of Brahmanic literature which is based on caste-based social and cultural order. Dalit children are directed against an inhuman system that was imposed on them. Dalit writers have gone through inhuman conditions and through their writings; they give voice to their pains and sufferings. So the anger expressed in Dalit literature is in fact a collective social voice. Rejection and revolt are the hallmarks of Dalit writings. They present a harrowing picture of Dalit exploitation denying essential human dignity, identity and representation to the people belonging to the lower castes in Indian caste system.

Narender Jadhav, himself a Dalit, narrates the suppression, torture, discrimination, deprivation faced by him and his family in his autobiography *Untouchables*. In his family his father was the first person to stand up against caste discrimination. He refused to let the circumstances dictated by the upper castes shape his life. He decided to shape his own destiny. He accomplished this by enrolling his children in the best possible educational institutes. The efforts of Jadhav's parents and Dr. Ambedkar have been brought to fruition in his generation. His parents worked hard to make the life of their children just like that of any other child in the world.

Growing up Untouchable in India: A Dalit Autobiography by Vasant Moon shows the tragic life of Dalits in middle India during the freedom struggle. There were rivalries on the basis of caste, politics, and religion. When Dalits trespass the social stratifications, they are beaten and killed by upper caste people. Vasant Moon authentically expressed his struggle and tale of survival in his autobiography. In this way, the portrayal of socio-economic conditions like poor settlement and shelter, lack

of drinking water, electricity, and hospital facilities are traced to support the analyses of the research. Dalits were discriminated in schools, workplaces, public places, travel, and politics. The atrocities based on caste gave sequences of the texts for the autobiographies. Dalits were exploited; Dalit women were raped and killed. When these victims voice against the social and legal injustices, they may also be treated as mere animals by the state government institutions.

The significance of Dalit identity in the caste hegemonic society is brought out in the narratives of autobiographers. Besides, Dalits understand their identity by reading the works of Mulk Raj Anand, Vijay Tendulkar, Premchand, Rabindernath Tagore and Ambedkar in religion and education. Dalit men and women actively participated in Ambedkar's ideology and considered him as "God of Dalits."

In addition to political identity, the Dalit discourse highlights caste based problems at the national and international forums. The writers and researchers were brought out to understand the social discrimination and debated on the issues. Dalit literature has been producing new forms of intellectual representation in various languages. It voices social and political consciousness and monitors the Dalits' welfare. Due to extreme and cruel caste-based discriminations in Hindu religion, many Dalit men and women have changed their religion to Christianity and Buddhism for their liberation. Those who have changed their religion also face such discrimination in new faith. In spite of deprivation, many of Dalits have received opportunities to get good education and jobs. For example, some Dalit women work as nurses in hospitals and clinics run by Christian missionary. However, they were, in due course, marginalised.

Though the government has taken many steps and measures for the upliftment of Dalits and to bring them to the mainstream, these steps fall short due to

lack of political will and awareness among the people about the scheme. There is a state-driven transfer of economic power that is slowly taking shape from the urban, westernized, educated upper-castes to the rural masses and intermediary castes.

It is amply clear that various issues related to minorities have started putting pressure on the policy formulation and implementation by the government. Also, the dominant heterogeneous groups are quite fragmented and government policy cannot be faulted for working to further the interests of any particular group as such. However, there are substantial difficulties including problems with the implementation of policies currently dealing with property rights and interests and the restructuring of rights of religious minorities. The plurality existing within the political framework and the pressures generated by the polity is now seeing a continuous process of social churning affecting the position of minority groups.

India has been running caste-based Reservation since independence for the upliftment of Dalit and many Dalits have utilized the scheme and attained good positions too. These new educated Dalits should come forward and spread the word among others so that they may also benefit from this. Government of India has brought various Education Schemes but most of them have failed. The government should address these issues and concerns of the people by recognizing their felt needs. Until and unless these people are educated, their upliftment is a distant step. Another important issue is of power as the power structure curtails the freedom of Dalits to choose to live as they desire. It plays a fundamental role in the perpetuation of their poverty. Assessing the power structure of the caste system is important to understand the dynamics of well-being of Dalits. It is to be realised that a formal recognition of diversity by the state is indispensable; it can minimize the disadvantages faced by a community in the public arena and create new opportunities for it.

With certain constraints and limitations, the present research explores the issues concerning Dalit children in India as narrated in the two Dalit autobiographies. Perhaps, no single research can afford to address the issues of Dalit children in its entirety, therefore, the research concludes with the possibility of further additions to its findings.